

# MÉGANE BRAUER



AIR DE PARIS

# MÉGANE BRAUER

Born in 1994 in Besançon, France.

Lives and works in Marseille, France.

« My work is based on my culture, that of the working classes and the environment in which they evolve. I attempt to convey the strength and beauty of it, whether it be the rage or the emancipatory self-derision, even when it comes to the mechanisms that are supposed to oppress them. It's a study of poor power, even poor spreading, blending installations, images, and writing.

My research focuses on how endured precarity upon bodies, minds, places, and even upon the objects that we, the poor, use, how this constant submission can be disrupted. In a revealing way, using our codes as precarious individuals, in our own way, for once. »

— Mégane Brauer

Combining writing, installation, video, sculpture, and performance, and drawing on her personal history, Mégane Brauer seeks to make visible the everyday lives and destinies of marginalized people in France, in a glittering and falsely magical universe.

She has had solo exhibitions, including : Les Rois du monde, MAC Marseille, 2024; Mordre et Tenir, Chapitre 3, Air de Paris, Romainville, 2023; Uni.e.s par le feu, Les Magasins Généraux, Pantin, 2022; SHOUT SISTER SHOUT !, La Rose, Marseille, 2021; Route 6, Printemps de l'Art contemporain with Vertical Looping(Star), Marseille, 2020. She has participated in many group exhibitions as well as : Étonner la catastrophe, FRAC Franche-Comté, Besançon, 2024; Musée Transitoire, Paris (2023); Ni drame ni suspense - les conditions de la durée, Triangle-Astérides, Marseille (2023); De toi à moi, Fondation Fiminco, Romainville (2022). She is the co-founder of the collective Freed From Desire, which offers residencies for emerging artists in rural areas. She is also a member of the collective 59 St Just.

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims

FMAC, Paris

FRAC Sud, Marseille

# **SELECTED EXHIBITIONS**

# Les rois du monde

## Curated by Stéphanie Airaud

### MAC Marseille, France

#### 26.10.2024 — 02.03.2025

Les Rois du monde is the second part of a series initiated by Mégane Brauer at the Musée Transitoire, Paris, in 2023. Mégane Brauer uses text as much as objects, but not necessarily on the same level. In 2023, the story around which the exhibition revolves, “Cry me a river”, was partially reproduced and pinned to the wall, but this time it’s present in its entirety: “At first, the work gave value to the text, but now it’s the other way round: it’s the text that gives value to the work”.

The installation is therefore a “reconstruction”, a “less livable simulation”, a “model of the text”, “intimate but new”, whose “witnesses” are “less personal”. It includes “my fridge, my furniture, but depersonalized”.

“Cry me a river” tells a story of childhood memories. It’s all true. It’s a true story, but it’s all false, amplified, absurd, large. The distortion is a necessary one, transposing the gaze of childhood to that of adulthood: “The truth is so big that I use fiction to make it truer”.

Under “hardcore white neon, nightmarish Gifi ambiance”, the sounds of the fridge, or the dripping of a fountain onto a plastic sofa resting on the Plexiglas of a giant swimming pool, take the place of ASMR. The pieces are “amplified”, but “the more time passes, the more disembodied they become”. “It’s a question of closing the story, which is put under vacuum, frozen, dead, finished”, of translating ‘the exhaustion of the story, the exhaustion of the affect of forms’.

If our aesthetic prescriptions are an objectification of affects, as Chinese-Canadian cultural theorist Sianne Ngai puts it, what happens when exhaustion takes over the works? After a book devoted to the zany, the cute and the interesting, as grids for reading the aesthetics of late capitalism<sup>2</sup>, she more recently published a book entitled Theory of The Gimmick: “This book deals with the gimmick, aesthetic judgment and capitalist form, simultaneously irritating and strangely seductive”.

The irritating and seductive character of Mégane Brauer’s works plays on the height of the glances that potentially intrude between the metal slats of the 8 blind wall shutters, along the heavy 2 m-high administrative shelf to the small pink children’s table in fuchsia plastic. 38 binders in plastic sleeves hold the cheap herbarium of 2,000 laurel flowers plucked from privileged private spaces in Marseille, like a “repetitive archive of what each bloom would represent”, “because they bloom and die a little”.

The aesthetic value of the sensitive experience proposed by Les Rois du monde collides with the commercial value of the objects and materials used. Mégane Brauer’s work signals the violence of the gap between mass production, the forced reproduction of underpaid labor, and the work of art; and she refuses to choose. She flirts with the gimmick and keeps us in the discomfort and disquiet that only sentiment can create, to prevent the stories that matter from being sold off to the highest bidder.



Exhibition views

Les rois du monde

MAC Marseille, France

2024-2025

Photo : © Jean-François Lyet



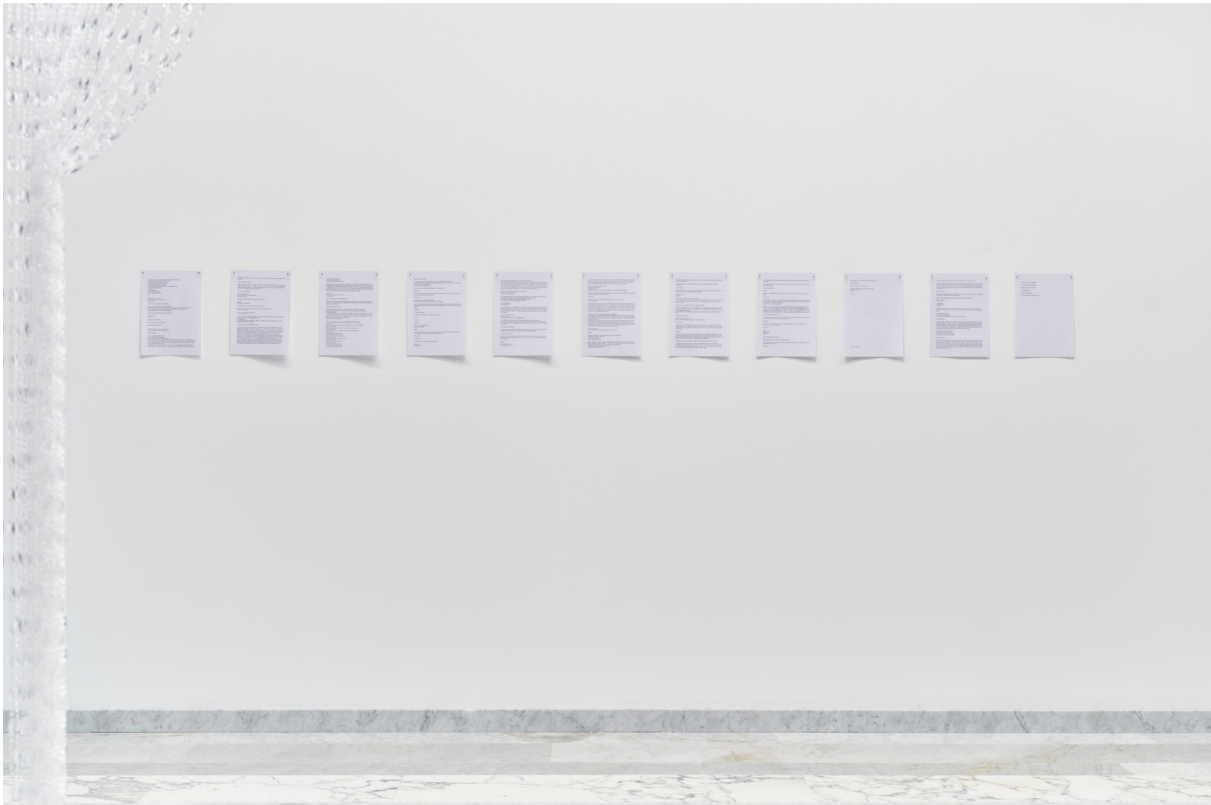
Exhibition views

Les rois du monde

MAC Marseille, France

2024-2025

Photo : © Jean-François Lyet



Exhibition views  
Les rois du monde  
MAC Marseille, France  
2024-2025  
Photo : © Jean-François Lyet

## Mordre et Tenir, Chapitre 3

### Air de Paris, Romainville, France

#### 20.02 — 02.04.2022

We have just finished a Skype call, during which I forgot to ask Mégane Brauer how she came up with the title *Mordre et tenir* (Deadly Grip), a series of works whose third instalment is to be on display at Air de Paris. A kind of third stage in the stewing of affect, in the crushing of body and spirit in the age of capitalism, 'in the France of anything goes', she says.

The pot in which this cold stew is cooking mostly contains literature – she quotes Mehdi Charef and Tassadit Imache to me. Brauer also writes her own poetic texts, which have an uncompromising bite. She chose to drop out of the anthropology and history degree she had embarked on at Lumière University Lyon 2 in favour of the Beaux-Arts in Besançon (ISBA), a solution that was more appropriate for her, she says, given the power of determinism. Her voice, while definitively rooted in reality, veers more towards poetry.

Pour son diplôme aux Beaux-arts, Mégane Brauer achète 40 paquets de spaghettis, une fois diplômée « J'ai dû manger mon travail pour survivre » raconte-t-elle.

Brauer bought 40 packets of spaghetti for her fine arts diploma – she says that having graduated, 'I had to eat my work in order to survive'.

L'Affrontement (Confrontation), the first instalment of *Mordre et tenir*, was staged in 2019 at the Beaux-Arts in Besançon. It involved a performance, evoking an episode from the daily life of Brauer and her best friend, another ISBA student, Mathieu Henejaert.

(...) In 2021 Brauer devised *Phénotype* (Phenotype), the second part of *Mordre et Tenir* as a follow-up to the Besançon show. The installation featured in the solo and group exhibition *Shout, Sister, Shout!* at La Rose, an art space located in North Marseille, organised by curator Céline Kopp and artist Wilfried Almendra – with spaghetti as the main character. She started out by boiling the strands of pasta and then shaping them into an organic form: glistening jellyfish, as she explains, suspended from fluorescent lamps – whose pink light illuminates them – and drenched in mint essential oil, which has anti-emetic properties.

(...) For this third instalment, she means to drown us in a deluge of salt and gluten, heralding an upcoming apocalypse – because 'if it's too real, no one gives a damn'. It's a way of 'clogging the exhibition's arteries with this nutritive matrix, this communal experience'.

She draws my attention to the installation's passage through three stages, proceeding from school to studio and ending in the gallery: from Besançon to Marseille and Paris. With unrelenting clarity, Brauer casts her net to capture a 'micro history' of precarity, a kind of broadening of the national narrative, which has been written with her and those like her kept very much in the background.

— Émilie Notéris  
Translated by Simon Cowper





Exhibition views  
Mordre et Tenir, Chapitre 3  
Air de Paris, Romainville, France  
2022  
Photo : © Marc Damage



Exhibition views  
Mordre et Tenir, Chapitre 3  
Air de Paris, Romainville, France  
2022  
Photo : © Marc Damage

## Uni-e-s par le feu

**With Anes Hoggas, Samet Jonuzi, Suela Jonuzi, Klevis Morina & Ersi Morina**

**Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France**

**02.04 — 08.05.2022**

After musician Thylacine in 2019 and artist and researcher Jeanne Vicerial in autumn 2021, Magasins Généraux has invited artist and activist Mégane Brauer to take possession of the entire site and its programming as part of an exhibition-residency.

For this first large-scale project in a cultural venue, Mégane Brauer chose to open up a new dimension in her work and extend her invitation to five young teenage exiles, with whom she forms an artistic collective and shares a common story around fire. The result is a vast, immersive and poetic environment made up of dozens of cypress trees that seem to burst into flames, and glittering coal. Designed to match the building and its architecture, which itself appears to be ablaze, it is the setting for texts, echoing objects, sound works and an invitation to take part in the project.

This artistic collaboration with several authors is also an opportunity to question copyright in the particular case of people living in exile. The residency is thus approached by transforming the Magasins Généraux for five weeks, not so much into a production workshop, but into a laboratory for artistic, social and legal research. Through encounters, workshops, performances and the pooling of knowledge, “Uni-e-s par le feu” seeks to address more generally and collectively the living conditions of people in situations of exile and precariousness, as well as the role of artistic creation and its social utility in today’s world.

« When I was a child, I witnessed a fire in a cypress hedge surrounding a Sonacotra shelter that encircled the perpetrators themselves and was immediately extinguished. A fire started out of anger and impotence, then nothing and no one to talk about it. The fire at St Just marked the brutal end of a place where many people had tried to launch collective struggles. The exhibition is not a literal translation, but rather what I have retained through a sort of trace of the links that make up this event.

How to create a dissonance between the precarity suffered by our bodies, our living spaces, our objects and our minds. These multiple and plural forms of precarity are at the heart of my work. I don’t pretend to want to change things, and I’m fairly deterministic, but what do we do with this shared history we’ve been subjected to, what’s left of it, and what can we make differently? For me, it’s through art, but there are many other possible forms.

(...) The challenge is to be able, as artists, to create our own decent working conditions, enabling us to remain the custodians of our work. And in the context of the exhibition at the Magasins Généraux, this comes into play through copyright, and it turns out that some of the protagonists I’ve invited are of foreign origin, even though I consider that as a French person, I’m an integral part of this collective.»



Exhibition views

Uni·e·s par le feu

Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France

2022

Photo : © Mathis Payet-Descombes



Exhibition views

Uni·e·s par le feu

Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France

2022

Photo : © Mathis Payet-Descombes



Exhibition views

Uni·e·s par le feu

Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France

2022

Photo : © Mathis Payet-Descombes

**Shout, Sister, Shout!**  
**With Heji Shin, Puppies Puppies, Eva Barto, Nora Turato**  
**& Jesse Darling**  
**Curated by Wilfrid Almendra & Céline Kopp**  
**La Rose, Marseille, France**  
**28.08 — 03.10.2021**

To mark the inauguration of La Rose, a new art space in Marseille's northern suburbs, Mégane Brauer presents Shout, Sister, Shout! For this exhibition, the two curators, Wilfrid Almendra and Céline Kopp, invited this young artist, who has been based in Marseille for three years, to accompany her works with those of Heji Shin, Puppies Puppies, Eva Barto, Nora Turato and Jesse Darling. These five artists were selected from the collections of Émilien Chayia and Sébastien Peyret.

The two curators say they "want to give it the strength of a hand clenched into a fist, by surrounding it with a community of practice or thought".

Opposite the entrance, a vast collage by Mégane Brauer unfurls on two adjoining walls. Begun in 2016 at the Institut des Beaux Arts in Besançon, and still in progress, Ce qu'on nous donne à manger was described as follows on the occasion of a workshop at ISBA:

«A selection of objects taped and assembled into a sprawling patchwork resulting from the recovery of compulsive purchases in hard discount stores, from associative circles, wholesalers or company bankruptcies, all massively accumulated for a use that underlines the idea of "poor special offer".

Elements incongruously interconnected in the most flashy and gaudy of ways.

Always in visual excess, this work uses precariousness as a scenario and amateurism as a way of doing things»

Mégane Brauer has installed a set of oil bottles with artificial sunflowers stuck into them. The title of the work La fin de nous (2021) is perplexing... Does it evoke the end of a love story, or is it a funeral tribute to those whose arteries have become clogged with too much bad fat, like those of the chicken eaten by the poor?

Facing Ce qu'on nous donne à manger, three painted dishcloths (Untitled, 2021) are lined up... There's a pretzel with a "aux ingrats" ("to the ungrateful"), three yellow plastic seats from a waiting room with the words "à toutes les bêtes traquées" ("to all hunted animals"), and a label on which the word Detergianos is flanked by a salute "aux cœurs qui s'arrêtent parce que ça suffit" ("to the hearts that stop because enough is enough")....

A little further on, on three sheets of paper, texts by Mégane Brauer cry out her anger, her revolt and assert her class allegiance, as we once said... They also offer a few "comments" on the works she has chosen to exhibit.



Exhibition views  
Shout, Sister, Shout!  
La Rose, Marseille, France  
2021  
Photo : ©J.C Lett





Exhibition views  
Shout, Sister, Shout!  
La Rose, Marseille, France  
2021  
Photo : ©J.C Lett

# **SELECTED ARTWORKS**



Ce qu'on nous donne à manger

2015-2017-2021

Patchwork : collages, magazine pages, drawings (ink and pencil on paper), leaflets, packaging (plastic and paper), digital prints (all from NOZ clearance stores)

Variable dimensions (circa 10 linear meters)

Unique



À nos deter'  
2020

Fountain, detergent smell, iridescent paper flowers, buckets, brooms, work shoes, sponges, mops, blue and purple gelatin filters, glitter, polystyrene.

Variable dimensions

Unique



Les marcheurs étendards

2018

Coat rack, plastic supermarket bags (Lidl, Noz...)

ca. 172 x ø 50 cm

Unique



Stayed A-live  
2023

Laminated image of Pedro x3, Strass, laminated wisteria image, laminated texts, plastic flowers with 4 orange labels, laminated paper hearts, sewn on pink satin, heart rhinestones, pearls and threads, silver or orange gold tacks.

122 x 65 cm

Unique



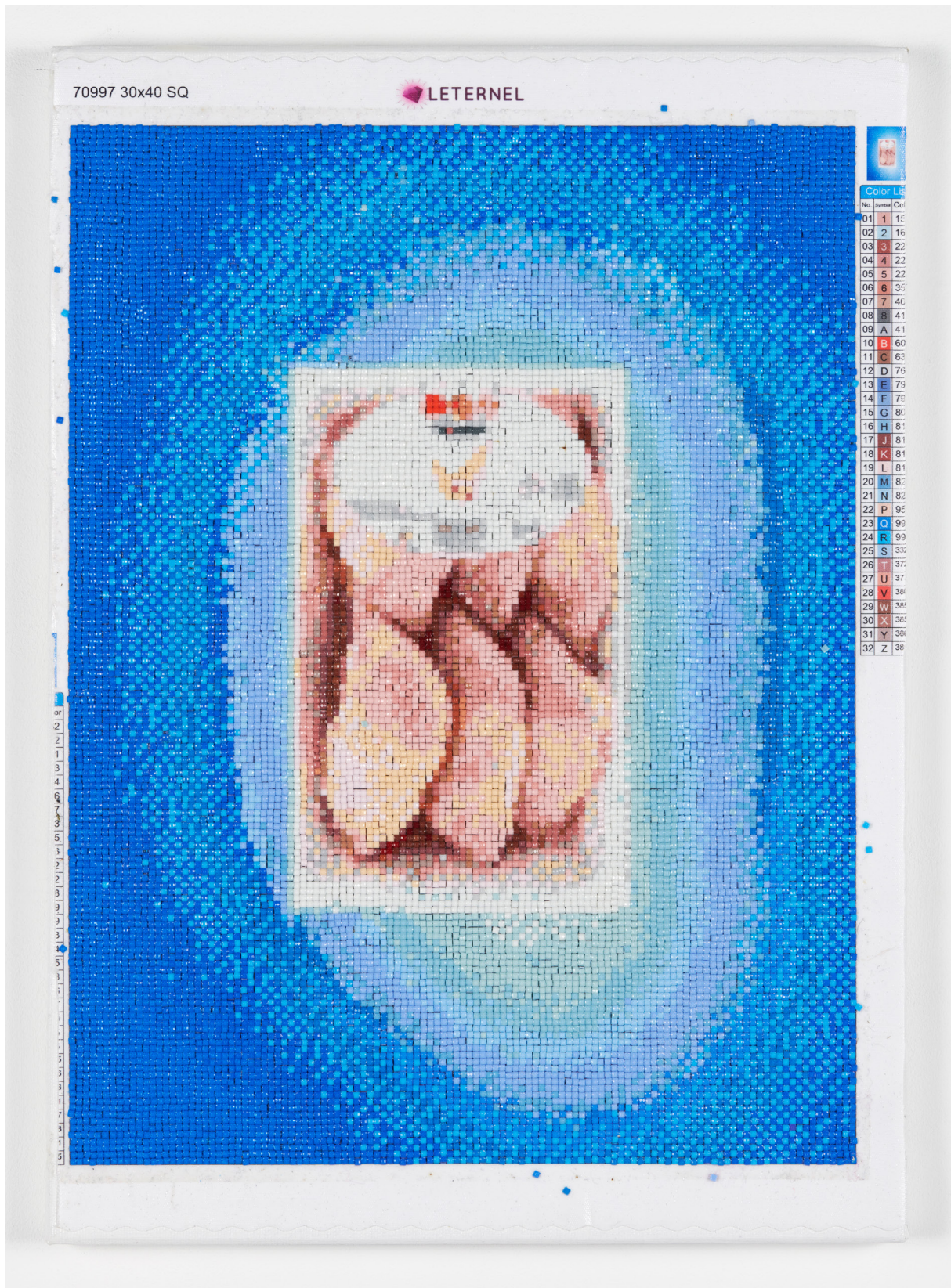
Lust 4 Life

2023

plastic table, fan, extension cord, black plastic crate (market gardening), plastic cherry tree branches, plastic cherry tree petals

150 x 140 x 70 cm

Unique



Tous les jours, poulet  
2024  
Diamond painting on frame, kitchen stain  
46 x 33 cm  
Unique





Tous les jours, gel douche sport  
2023  
Diamond painting, on frame, kitchen stain  
46 x 38 cm  
Unique



Tous les jours, pâte à tartiner  
 2023  
 Diamond painting, on frame, kitchen stain  
 46 x 33 cm  
 Unique



Pour celles, à celles et ceux qui s'en foutent de Mozart  
2023  
Acrylic paint on cloth, price tag  
53 x 54 cm  
Unique



Pour celles, à celles et ceux qui porteront les chaussures des morts  
2023  
Acrylic paint on cloth  
53 x 54 cm  
Unique



Genre comme si tout était normal

2023

Uber Eat bag, Zen fountain, Mini Atomizer (smoked steam), stacked bath mats (green and purple), cardboard box, black doormat amethysts, gallet, water

71 x 55 x 45 cm

Unique